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Lambda Letters Project

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Governor on Our Side, Signs AB 196

By Boyce Hinman, Chief Lobbyist

The gubernatorial recall election may be aiding our cause. How can that be?

On August 2 Governor Davis signed AB 196, a bill prohibiting employment and housing discrimination against transgender people. Even though he had twelve days after receiving the bill to sign or veto it, he signed it after only four days.

In July the governor signed AB 266, a bill making it easier for San Mateo County to offer domestic partner benefits to its employees and retirees. Now he says he will sign AB 205 if the legislature sends it to him (see this month's LGBTI Issue).

What does this show of support on the part of Governor Davis mean? Some activists and lobbyists in our community think the governor is inclined to sign all our bills because he needs our votes in the recall election. His actions on AB 266 and AB 196 suggest they are right. If so, this could be a very exciting year for our community.

The protections provided by AB 196 become effective January 1, 2004. This means transgender people may want to wait till then before coming out on

Continued on page 13

Vote No on Prop. 54

By Pat Washington, LLP Board Member

On October 7 Californians will decide on one of the most important ballot initiatives in state history. Proposition 54, the racial information ban sponsored by Ward Connerly, seeks to prohibit state and local governments, universities, school districts, healthcare providers, and other public agencies from collecting or using information on race, ethnicity, color, or national origin. If this initiative passes, it could have an enormous impact on efforts to improve healthcare and education and would severely hamper efforts to correct racial disparities in these areas, as well as in employment, housing, and lending.

Connerly and other supporters of Prop. 54 profess a belief that preventing the collection of racial data will result in a "colorblind" society. If we don't check those little boxes self-identifying as White, Black, Latino, Asian, Native American, then race won't matter. If we keep researchers, watchdogs, and whistleblowers from collecting and using statistics on our race/ethnicity and national origin, then the decision-makers in our lives (educators, employers, police officers, etc.) won't see our skin color, hear our accents, or notice our surnames. This argument is either simplistically naïve or deliberately disingenuous. Even

Continued on page 13

Also in This Issue...

Women's Issue	3
LGBTI Issue	3
HIV/AIDS Issue	4
People of Color Issue	4
September Legislative Update	5-11
Opposition to Same-Sex Marriage Failing	13

Lambda Letters Progress Report

Letters & Messages Collected

July, 2003	24,518 letters & e-mails
In all of 2003	156,150 letters & e-mails

Dollars Spent

July, 2003	\$4,819
In all of 2003	\$30,817

Can You Help?

Please support the very important work of the Lambda Letters Project with your contributions.

Lambda Letters Project

Mission Statement

To promote people of color, feminist, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and HIV/AIDS status advocacy; and to bring people of color, women, lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex persons, and persons affected by or living with HIV/AIDS into full participation in American society.

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Have you experienced employment discrimination because of your actual or perceived sexual orientation or because of your age (40 and over), ancestry, color, creed, disability, marital status, medical condition, national origin, race, religion, or sex? Have you been denied family and medical care leave or pregnancy disability leave?

If so, you may register a complaint with the Department of Fair Employment and Housing. In cases of employment discrimination, call the department at (800) 884-1684. In cases of housing discrimination, call (800) 233-3212. The person answering the phone will schedule an appointment for you at the Department of Fair Employment and Housing Office which is closest to your home or place of employment.

A Therapeutic Hand

By Adrienne Lauby, LLP Analyst

Despite its image of naval-gazing for bored rich people, psychotherapy has proven itself over the past few decades. Therapy can make a critical difference—saving jobs, rescuing marriages, ending addictions, bonding children with adults, and preventing suicides. It has prevented bigger and more chronic conditions.

Back in 2000, a legislative committee found that low-income people and people of color couldn't get therapy when they needed it. Therapy wasn't affordable, and it didn't match their language or cultural requirements. The California Joint Legislative Committee on Mental Health Reform had a solution: Add licensed marriage counselors, family therapists, and clinical social workers to the list of mental health professionals allowed under the Medi-Cal program. This would make 36,000 additional professionals available, many with the skill and ability to work with poor people, including people of color. Three years later, therapy is still unavailable.

AB 183, the Mental Health Prevention Bill, sponsored by Assemblymember Joe Nation (D-San Rafael), hopes finally to implement the committee's recommendations. The emotional insight, patience, and listening skills of professional therapists were once considered almost exclusively female skills—and rarely were women paid to apply them. Even today, mostly women notice emotional disasters in the making and seek therapy for loved ones. Licensed therapists and clinical social workers work at the low-paid end of the psychology profession—and most of them are women.

AB 183 will help female therapists and also help women, children, and their families who need it. Please support this important piece of legislation by signing the sample letter to Governor Davis this month. ###



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Protect Our Children, Their Caregivers

By Boyce Hinman, Chief Lobbyist

Things are looking good this year for the Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender/Intersex (LGBTI) community. As I wrote on page 1, Governor Davis signed AB 266, a bill making it easier for San Mateo County to offer domestic partner benefits to its employees and retirees; he also signed AB 196, a bill banning discrimination against transgender people.

Now he says he will sign AB 205 if the legislature sends it to him. This bill would grant to domestic partners in California most of the rights and duties of marriage. He apparently is being so supportive of our bills because he needs to cement our community's support in the upcoming recall election.

Things may be tougher for AB 458, however. This bill would ban discrimination against LGBTI foster children and against LGBTI adults who would care for foster children. The idea of adults from the LGBTI community caring for children still strikes fear in the hearts of many people. Many still believe the stereotype that this community consists of child molesters. Although the bill has been approved by both houses in the state legislature, at the time of this writing it is back in the Assembly for their agreement to minor changes made to it in the Senate.

We expect the bill to get final approval in the Assembly and be sent to the governor. However, he may be afraid to sign this bill out of fear of the reaction from many voters about the "child molesters among us."

We need to persuade Governor Davis to sign this important bill. Please write to him this month asking him to do just that.

###

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Support Sexual Health Education

By Jamie E. Shauvin, LLP Analyst

The California Comprehensive Sexual Health and HIV/AIDS Prevention Education Act, also known as SB 71—which Senator Sheila Kuehl (D–Los Angeles) introduced in January—would authorize California’s school districts to provide comprehensive sex health education to students in kindergarten and grades 1–12 and require that all students in grades 7–12 receive HIV/AIDS prevention education.

SB 71 is currently scheduled for review by Governor Davis.

California’s sex education laws currently are a mind-boggling maze that results in many school districts not having a clearly defined framework to follow when providing students with information on how to prevent sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and unintended pregnancies, and how to develop a healthy attitude toward their sexuality. SB 71 would provide schools with improved guidelines regarding sex education and ensure that sex education in California public schools remains bias-free, medically accurate, and comprehensive.

The public wants comprehensive sex education. Polls have found that as many as 85 percent of Californians are in favor of comprehensive sex education for their children.

Specifically, SB 71 would replace 11 existing laws scattered throughout the Education Code relating to sex education with one new section for sex education and HIV/AIDS. SB 71 would respect the rights of parents who want to exclude their children from sex and HIV/AIDS education by allowing them to opt their children out if they so choose. SB 71 would require that educators are knowledgeable about the most recent research on sexuality, pregnancy, and STDs. SB 71 would require that sex education be medically accurate and age-appropriate. SB 71 would require that sex education stress the values of abstinence while not ignoring those students that have been or are sexually active. SB 71 would ensure that sex education be bilingual, culturally sensitive, and free from bias. Please write to Governor Davis, or sign the sample letter enclosed, and urge him to approve SB 71. ###

Help Patients Understand Their Doctors

By Marty Martinez, LLP Analyst

With California’s communities becoming increasingly diverse and integrated it is important for our healthcare delivery system to establish procedures that meet the health needs of people who do not speak English well or at all. According to 2000 Census data, 40 percent of Californians speak a language other than English at home. Yet when a person of limited English proficiency calls a health plan to make an appointment with a doctor, that person’s experience and ease of communicating vary dramatically from health plan to health plan.

SB 853 by Senator Martha Escutia (D–Norwalk) moves to address this problem. The bill would require health plans to provide oral interpreters and translated documents to their enrollees who do not speak English well. The bill would also allow the Department of Managed Health Care to begin working to improve the care provided to our communities.

Currently most health plans have no requirements to care for the needs of persons who do not speak English well. Studies show that the lack of language services affects access to healthcare services and preventive care, results in greater emergency room use, impedes patients from comprehending diagnoses and asking questions, and increases the likelihood of patients missing appointments. Each person’s health impacts us all and with culture strongly influencing one’s perception of disease, prevention, and behavior modification, the need for culturally and linguistically appropriate health services becomes imperative.

SB 853 would ensure that people of limited English proficiency have quality and accessible healthcare and that communication or language barriers which compromise health are eliminated. It would also help improve access to needed healthcare and increase the utilization of important services.

The bill is currently before Governor Davis. Please sign and send him the enclosed letter urging him to sign this important piece of legislation.

###

September Legislative Update

We are now at the end of the state legislative process. The Legislature will closed for the year on September 12. All bills for this year had to be approved by the Legislature and sent to Governor Davis no later than midnight on September 12. Because this list had to be completed early to make our newsletter deadline, however, the status of the following bills is as of late August. To see the final outcome for each of the bills, please check our Legislative Update in October's newsletter or on the Lambda Letters Project Web site (www.lambdaletters.org).

Once a bill goes to the governor he can sign it, veto it, or allow it to become law without his signature. How long he has to decide on each bill depends on when it was sent to him. If the bill was sent to him on or before August 29 he has 12 days to make his decision. He has until October 12 to decide on any bills sent to him after August 29. It is our understanding that Governor Davis may legally remain in office 28 days after the recall vote, even if he loses that vote. Therefore, we expect him to be making the decision on whether or not to veto any bills sent to him this year.

You may see "Placed in committee suspense file" on the status line of some bills. That means the Senate Appropriations Committee and the House Appropriations Committee put off voting on any bills that cost over \$100,000 until the last minute. They do this by putting these bills in the "suspense file." Both appropriations committees will vote on these bills in late August.

You may see "Sent to floor under Senate Rule 28.8" on the status line of some other bills. That means that an appropriations committee chair used his or her authority to excuse a bill from being voted on in the

committee. In that case, the bill is sent to the floor of the house to be voted on there. The chair can do this on bills that are expected to cost the state very little money.

HIV/AIDS Issues

AB 4 (Wilma Chan, D-Oakland)

Purpose: To impose—for taxable years beginning on or after January 1, 2003—10 percent and 11 percent maximum rates for taxpayers with taxable incomes over certain amounts, and impose an 8.5 percent maximum rate based upon the taxpayer's alternative minimum taxable income.

Status: Awaiting a final vote on the Assembly floor.

LLP Position: Support. This will reduce the pressure to cut important health programs.

AB 879 (Paul Koretz, D-West Hollywood)

Purpose: To require the Office of AIDS to convene a task force to develop recommendations for the use of post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) in the general population for the prevention of HIV infection.

Status: Sent to the Senate floor under Senate Rule 28.8.

LLP Position: Support.

AB 946 (Patty Berg, D-Santa Rosa)

Purpose: To authorize cities or counties to develop clean needle and syringe exchange projects that contain prescribed components. This bill would require a participating county or city to assess the project using certain criteria and submit a progress report that takes into consideration data from the assessment.

Status: Sent to the Senate floor under Senate Rule 28.8.

LLP Position: Support.

AB 1324 (Darrell Steinberg, D-Sacramento)

Purpose: To state the intent of the Legislature to improve the workers' compensation system by promoting the efficient delivery of high-quality, appropriate medical care.

Status: Sent to a conference committee.

LLP Position: Neutral. The bill no longer relates to any of our issue areas.

AB 1676 (John Dutra, D-Fremont)

Purpose: To allow testing of blood from a pregnant

Deborah A. Brooks

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Legislative Update

Continued from page 5

woman for the presence of HIV. Existing law requires a physician and surgeon to obtain a blood specimen from a pregnant woman before or at the time of delivery. Under the bill, HIV testing would not be required if the pregnant woman has been previously determined to be chronically infected with HIV, as specified. The bill would require certain medical care providers to ensure that the woman is informed of, among other things, the purpose of testing and that the woman has a right to refuse testing.

Status: Approved by the Senate Health and Human Services Committee. Sent to the Senate Appropriations Committee suspense file.

LLP Position: Support.

SB 71 (Sheila Kuehl, D-Los Angeles)

Purpose: Among other things, to authorize school districts to provide comprehensive sexual health education, as defined, in grades K-12, and to require school districts to ensure that all pupils in grades 7-12 receive HIV/AIDS prevention education.

Status: Approved by the Assembly Education Committee. Sent to the Assembly Appropriations Committee suspense file.

LLP Position: Support.

SB 131 (Byron Sher, D-Redwood City)

Purpose: To change the punishments for the first and later charges of possession of a small amount of marijuana.

Status: Approved by the Assembly Appropriations Committee. Sent to the Assembly floor for a final vote.

LLP Position: Neutral. The bill seems to reduce the number of possession violations which would result in diversion to a drug treatment program.

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SB 151 (John Burton, D-San Francisco)

Purpose: To eliminate the extra paperwork required of doctors when prescribing a Schedule II controlled substance (mostly potent pain medications).

Status: Approved by the Assembly Committee on Public Safety. Sent to the Assembly Appropriations Committee. Placed in committee suspense file.

LLP Position: Support. The bill should reduce the barriers to providing adequate pain management to patients.

SB 774 (John Vasconcellos, D-San Jose)

Purpose: To authorize a licensed pharmacist to sell hypodermic needles or syringes to a person without a prescription under specified conditions, and to authorize a person to possess up to 30 hypodermic needles or syringes if acquired through an authorized source. These things would facilitate authorized clean needle exchange programs around the state.

Status: Approved by the Assembly Appropriations Committee. Sent to the Assembly floor for a final vote in that house.

LLP Position: Support.

LGBTI Issues

AB 17 (Christine Kehoe, D-San Diego)

Purpose: To prohibit a state agency from entering into a contract for the acquisition of goods or services with a vendor or contractor who does not offer benefits to domestic partner employees, as defined, that are equal to benefits offered to employees with spouses, except as otherwise specified.

Status: Sent to the Senate Appropriations Committee suspense file.

LLP Position: Support.

AB 76 (Ellen Corbett, D-San Leandro)

Purpose: To make it unlawful for an employer to fail to take immediate and appropriate corrective action to prevent harassment of an employee by an applicant, or a person providing services or by any person, once the employer knows or should have known of this conduct.

Status: Sent to the Senate floor under Senate Rule 28.8.

Position: Support.

AB 196 (Mark Leno, D-San Francisco)

Purpose: To ban discrimination against transgender people.

Status: Signed by the governor.

LLP Position: Support.

AB 205 (Jackie Goldberg, D-Los Angeles)

Purpose: To extend the rights and responsibilities of marriage to registered domestic partners, and to revise the process for registering as domestic partners.

Status: Approved by the Senate Judiciary Committee. Sent to the Senate Appropriations Committee for a vote on August 25.

LLP Position: Support.

AB 266 (Gene Mullin, D-San Mateo)

Purpose: To authorize the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors to elect to grant domestic partner benefits to the partners of county employees and retirees, through collective bargaining and based on actuarial cost estimates.

Status: Signed by the governor.

LLP Position: Support.

AB 458 (Judy Chu, D-Monterey Park)

Purpose: To guarantee the rights of a foster child to have fair and equal access to all services, placement, care, treatment, and benefits, and not to be subjected

to discrimination or harassment on the basis of actual or perceived race, ethnic group identification, ancestry, national origin, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or mental or physical disability. Also to require training for administrators, licensing personnel, licensed foster parents, and relative caretakers to include training about this right.

Status: Approved by the Senate. Sent to the Assembly for concurrence with amendments made to the bill in the Senate.

LLP Position: Support.

AB 1082 (John Laird, D-Santa Cruz)

Purpose: The state government and many local governments are part of the Public Employees Retirement System (PERS). This system allows these governments to offer health benefits to the domestic partners of their employees and retirees if the employees or retirees and their partners meet the state's definition of domestic partnership. Some local governments prior to January 1, 2001, created definitions of domestic partners which differ from the state's definition. AB 1082 would allow these governments to offer health benefits to any persons meeting those local definition of a domestic

Continued on page 8

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Legislative Update

Continued from page 7

partner of an employee or retiree of those governments.

Status: Approved by the Senate Appropriations Committee. Sent to the Senate floor for a final vote in that house.

LLP Position: Support.

AB 1250 (John Laird, D–Santa Cruz)

Purpose: To provide funding for training of teachers designed to improve prevention of intolerance and hatred in schools.

Status: Sent to the Senate floor under Senate Rule 28.8.

LLP Position: Support.

SB 85 (Tom Torlakson, D–Walnut Creek)

Purpose: To allow any county to offer the same death benefits, optional retirement allowances, or survivor's allowances to a registered domestic partner of a county employee or retiree that are currently offered to a spouse of a county employee or retiree. However, for the domestic partner to qualify for the benefits, an affidavit of domestic partnership must be on file with the county one year prior to the employee's retirement or death prior to retirement.

Status: Approved by the Assembly Public Employees and Retirement Committee. Sent to the Assembly floor for a final vote in that house.

LLP Position: Support.

People of Color Issues

AB 25 (Fabian Nunez, D–Los Angeles)

Purpose: To require state agencies to accept as valid identification of a person a foreign identification card issued by another nation, as defined, to its citizens or nationals, subject to specified exceptions. Would allow police officers to request additional ID if the officers thought the original ID might be a fake.

Status: Sent to the Senate floor under Senate Rule 28.8.

LLP Position: Support.

AB 30 (Keith Richman, R–Granada Hills)

Purpose: To require the state to expand the Healthy Families Program to provide health insurance coverage to employed, childless adults who are uninsured for healthcare coverage and who meet certain household income requirements, and also to working parents or

adult care givers of children in the Healthy Families Program, subject to approval of a federal waiver and appropriation of state matching funds. Could result in the new covered person owing \$2,000 to \$3,000 in copayments per year.

Status: Approved by the Senate Insurance Committee. Sent to the Senate Appropriations Committee. No hearing date set yet.

LLP Position: Switched to neutral because of the copayments.

AB 54 (Jenny Oropeza, D–Carson)

Purpose: To require the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, in consultation with the State Department of Education, to contract with an independent evaluator to conduct a study of the availability and effectiveness of cultural training for public school teachers and administrators. The bill would require the study to focus on 10 culturally diverse schools that reflect the diverse demography and geography of California and would prescribe criteria for selecting those schools.

Status: Sent to the Senate Appropriations Committee suspense file.

LLP Position: Support.

AB 177 (Jenny Oropeza, D–Carson)

Purpose: To require that voters pamphlets include a statement setting forth various specified rights of voters during an election, including the right to get election materials in a language other than English. The secretary of state would be required to print posters in English and Spanish and other languages, setting forth the list of rights, and distribute the posters to county elections officials for display by precinct officials at their polling places.

Status: Approved by the Senate Appropriations Committee. Sent to the Senate floor for a final vote in that house.

LLP Position: Support.

AB 231 (Darrel Steinberg, D–Sacramento)

Purpose: To help people qualify for the CalWORKs and Food Stamp Programs which serve limited-income people in California. Because their assets are reviewed to see whether they qualify for the programs, this bill states that a car owned by someone should not be considered when determining whether that person has few-enough assets to qualify for the programs. Would also require each county welfare department, to the

maximum extent allowable under federal law, to provide transitional food stamp benefits to households terminating their participation in the CalWORKs program for a period of five months. Also would eliminate a fingerprint electronic ID system now used by the food stamp programs. Studies show that this system is ineffective in eliminating duplicate applications.

Status: Approved by the Senate Health and Human Services Committee. Put on the Senate Appropriations Committee suspense file.

LLP Position: Support.

AB 292 (Leland Yee, D-San Francisco)

Purpose: To provide that a state or local governmental agency, or a public or private agency supported by state funding, shall not use any child, or permit any child to be used, as a translator or interpreter in any matter involving the business or function of that agency except as specified. Also to require each agency that receives state funding to have available for inspection an established procedure for translation services that provide competent translation services.

Status: Approved by the Senate Judiciary Committee. Sent to the Senate Appropriations Committee suspense file.

LLP Position: Support.

AB 309 (Judy Chu, D-Monterey Park)

Purpose: Existing law requires a person in a trade or business who negotiates contracts primarily in Spanish to deliver a Spanish copy of the contract to the other party prior its execution. Failure to do so can void the contract. This bill extends these provisions to contracts negotiated in Chinese, Tagalog, Vietnamese, and Korean. Only becomes operative if SB 146 is also passed.

Status: Approved by the Senate. Sent to the Assembly

for concurrence with changes made to the bill in the Senate.

LLP Position: Support, but would prefer the bill to cover all languages.

AB 522 (Manny Diaz, D-San Jose)

Purpose: To require local governments to accept for purposes of personal identification an identification card issued by the Mexican Consulate Office, to the extent permitted by federal law, the same as a driver's license or identification card issued by the Department of Motor Vehicles except when possession of a valid driver's license is required by law. Would allow police officers to request additional ID if the officers thought the original ID might be a fake.

Status: Approved by the Senate Public Safety Committee. Awaiting a final vote on the Senate floor.

LLP Position: Support.

AB 801 (Manny Diaz, D-San Jose)

Purpose: To create a voluntary program for physicians. It would develop voluntary classes to teach foreign languages to interested physicians, and teach physicians about cultural practices and beliefs that impact healthcare. The bill would reduce the barriers to healthcare faced by many minority Californians. Will also make technical changes to a program, already in place, which allows licensed dentists from Mexico to practice dentistry in California.

Status: Sent to the Senate floor under Senate Rule 28.8.

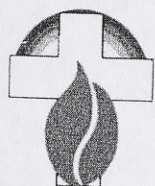
LLP Position: Support.

AB 1657 (Wilma Chan, D-Oakland)

Purpose: To prohibit the sale, offering for sale, distribution, or import into this state of any *prepackaged* gelatin-based (like Jell-O) alcoholic beverage unless it is sold, offered for sale, or intended to be sold in a business establishment (for consumption on the premises) that prohibits the presence of persons under 21 years of age on its premises.

Status: Approved by the Assembly and sent to the Senate Governmental Organization Committee for a hearing on June 10. Hearing cancelled by committee.

LLP Position: Support.



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Legislative Update

Continued from page 9

AJR 3 (Jerome Horton, D-Inglewood)

Purpose: To urge Congress and the president of the United States to repeal the federal law which denies or delays access to federal scholarships for students who have prior convictions for drug related offenses.

Status: Approved by the Senate Education Committee. Awaiting a final vote on the Senate floor.

LLP Position: Support.

SB 17 (Martha Escutia, D-Norwalk)

Purpose: To amend the laws relating to property taxes on nonresidential commercial and industrial property to eliminate loopholes that have allowed such properties to evade reassessment upon sale of the property.

Status: Sent to the Assembly Appropriations Committee suspense file.

LLP Position: Support. This bill would increase tax revenues and reduce the need to cut spending on health and social services programs.

SB 24 (Liz Figueroa, D-Fremont)

Purpose: To require the Child Health and Disability Prevention (CHDP) program to confirm the eligibility of, and issue a Medi-Cal card to, any child under the age of one who appears to be eligible for Medi-Cal.

Status: Sent to Assembly Appropriations Committee suspense file.

LLP Position: Support. This bill would provide another door into Medi-Cal for poor children and eliminate the need for them to go to another office to apply for Medi-Cal.

SB 36 (Wes Chesbro, D-Santa Rosa)

Purpose: To provide that federally qualified health center services and rural health clinic services, as defined, are covered benefits under the Medi-Cal program, to be reimbursed to providers on a per-visit

basis. The bill would also provide for various requirements pertaining to the reimbursement of these services.

Status: Approved by the Assembly Health Committee. Sent to the Assembly Appropriations Committee. A vote on this bill was put off until the next meeting of the committee, probably August 27.

LLP Position: Support.

SB 43 (Gil Cedillo, D-Los Angeles)

Purpose: To provide an easy way for people to contribute to the Emergency Food Assistance Program Fund by submitting extra money with taxes owed to the state each year. The bill would permit this until January 1, 2009.

Status: Approved by the Assembly Revenue and Tax Committee. Awaiting a final vote on the floor of the Assembly.

LLP Position: Support.

SB 146 (Martha Escutia, D-Norwalk)

Purpose: To help non-English-speaking people understand business contracts they sign. Current law requires business people who negotiate certain contracts primarily in Spanish to deliver a Spanish translation of the contract to other parties prior to execution of the contract. This bill adds that the Spanish document must include a translation of every term and condition in that contract.

Status: Approved by the Assembly Committee on Banking and Finance. Awaiting a final vote on the Assembly floor.

LLP Position: Support, but we would like other languages added to the bill.

SB 853 (Martha Escutia, D-Norwalk)

Purpose: To require that healthcare service plans in California offer access to language assistance and culturally competent health care services.

Status: Sent to the Assembly Appropriations Committee suspense file.

LLP Position: Support.

SB 921 (Sheila Kuehl, D-Los Angeles)

Purpose: To declare the intent of the Legislature to implement a single-payer, universal healthcare delivery system in California.

Status: Approved by the Senate and sent to the Assembly. Dropped by the author until 2004.

LLP Position: Support.

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Women's Issues

AB 23 (Joe Nation, D–San Rafael)

Purpose: To create the Mammography Patient Best Principles that include prescribed expectations of mammography patients.

Status: Approved by the Assembly and Senate. Back in the Assembly for concurrence with changes made to the bill in the Senate.

LLP Position: Support.

AB 134 (Rebecca Cohn, D–Campbell)

Purpose: In certain circumstances, to increase the penalty for domestic violence if the accused had been convicted previously of domestic violence.

Status: Approved by the Senate. Sent to the Assembly for concurrence with changes made to the bill in the Senate.

LLP Position: Support.

AB 183 (Joe Nation, D–San Rafael)

Purpose: To include licensed marriage and family therapist and licensed clinical social workers services within the scope of Medi-Cal covered benefits, to the extent that federal matching funds are available for those services.

Status: Approved by the Senate Health and Human Services Committee. Sent to the Appropriations Committee suspense file.

LLP Position: Support.

AB 184 (Alan Lowenthal, D–Long Beach)

Purpose: To allow the driver's registration public records of the victims of domestic violence and stalking to be kept confidential.

Status: Approved by the Senate Appropriations Committee. Sent to the Senate floor for a final vote in that house.

LLP Position: Support.

AB 506 (Bill Maze, R–Visalia)

Purpose: To require the police in sexual assault cases to test the victim's blood and urine to see if the victim had been drugged by the attacker, unless the victim objects to the test.

Status: Sent to the Senate floor under Senate Rule 28.8.

LLP Position: Support.

AB 898 (Judy Chu, D–Monterey Park)

Purpose: To authorize a law enforcement agency investigating certain felony sex offenses, upon the request of the victim, to inform the victim whether or not a DNA profile was obtained from the testing of the rape kit evidence or other crime scene evidence from their case; whether that information had been entered into the Department of Justice Data Bank of case evidence; and whether there is a match between the DNA profile developed from the rape kit evidence or other crime scene evidence and a DNA profile contained in the Department of Justice Convicted Offender DNA Database.

Status: Sent to the Senate Appropriations Committee suspense file.

LLP Position: Support.

AB 1557 (Loni Hancock, D–Berkeley)

Purpose: To strengthen laws that ban the state from buying clothing and other items manufactured in sweat shops.

Status: Sent to the Senate Appropriations Committee suspense file.

LLP Position: Support.

SB 490 (Deirdre Alpert, D–San Diego)

Purpose: To simplify and reduce the paperwork that pharmacists must now go through before selling an emergency contraception drug, such as RU 486, to a customer. Would require a pharmacist to go through "emergency contraception" training before being allowed to sell RU 486 under the new rules.

Status: Passed the Assembly Appropriations Committee. Sent to the Assembly floor for a final vote in that house.

LLP Position: Support.

SB 545 (Jackie Speier, D–San Mateo)

Purpose: To simplify and reduce the paperwork that pharmacists must now go through before selling an emergency contraception drug, such as RU 486, to a customer. Also to reduce the training needed for a pharmacist to dispense the drug.

Status: Passed by the Assembly Appropriations Committee. Sent to the Assembly floor for a final vote in that house.

LLP Position: Support.

###

Vote No on Prop. 54

Continued from page 1

more insidious is the implication that eliminating statistics on racial disparities in healthcare, housing, education, and other services will cause the disparities themselves to disappear.

Contrary to the proponents of Prop. 54, we need more information—not less—when it comes to improving healthcare delivery and reducing our risk of, and vulnerability to, disease. Without critical information on race and national origin, health officials and researchers will not be able to understand and appropriately address the higher incidence of breast cancer among white women, the higher rate of infant mortality among African Americans, the higher rate of tuberculosis among Asian Pacific Islanders, and so forth.

We need more information—not less—when it comes to providing a sound, quality education to all children, “regardless of race, color, or national origin.” Without critical information on race and national origin, teachers and educational researchers will not be able to understand and appropriately address racial disparities in educational access and attainment. How can we address such disparities—and hold schools accountable for eliminating them—if we ban racial information?

Finally, we need more information—not less—to enforce civil rights in employment, housing, lending, and other areas where discrimination can and does occur. Preventing racial profiling and hate crimes depends on our ability to compile and track racial statistics. (Ironically, Prop. 54 would not prohibit or prevent racial profiling on the part of police; it would simply prevent anyone from gathering data *about* racial profiling.)

Significantly, Prop. 54 hasn’t been a wedge issue driving progressive groups apart. Educators, healthcare providers, labor groups, civil rights groups, and peace activists have joined forces to defeat this deceptive initiative. Progressives from every walk of life recognize that Prop. 54 has dangerous consequences for us all. The proposed ban on racial information has nothing to do with “privacy” (racial information is usually anonymous and provided on a voluntary basis only) and everything to do with disenfranchising people who need targeted healthcare, educational access, and protection from discrimination in employment, housing, lending, and other services.

When you go to the polls on October 7th, please vote No on Proposition 54. ###

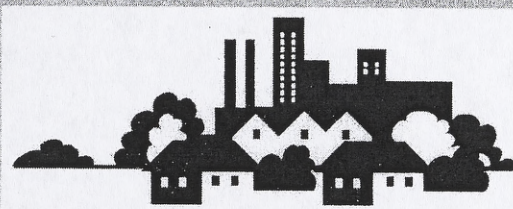
Governor on Our Side

Continued from page 1

the job or where they rent property. If people do face gender-based discrimination after January 1, they can submit complaints to the State Department of Fair Employment and Housing (DFEH). For employment discrimination complaints they can call (800) 884-1684; for housing discrimination complaints they can call (800) 233-3212. Despite their assistance starting next year, the DFEH has no police force to investigate the facts. They will rely heavily on you to provide evidence of discrimination, which may include statements from witnesses (your coworkers) or documents that demonstrate discrimination.

Also be aware that AB 196 applies only to employers who regularly employ five or more employees. The bill does not apply to an employer that is a religious association or corporation not organized for private profit. Landlords who rent a room in their own home may be exempt as well.

Nonetheless, AB 196 is a major breakthrough. Governor Davis’ signing it into law brings transgender people closer to having the same legal protections that have been available to lesbians, gays, and bisexuals for several years. ###



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Opposition to Same-Sex Marriage Falling

By Boyce Hinman, Chief Lobbyist

Gay marriage has been in the news a lot lately. The supreme courts of Massachusetts and Connecticut are currently considering lawsuits to overturn those states' laws against same-sex marriage. Many political commentators say those courts are likely to overturn the ban. Many commentators also say the U.S. Supreme Court's recent decision to overturn all state sodomy laws provides fertile ground for seeking a federal court decision to overturn state and federal laws that ban same-sex marriage.

On the other hand, many politicians are speaking out against the legalization of same-sex marriage. President Bush said he believes Congress should pass a bill to prohibit states from recognizing same-sex marriage. In the early 1990s Congress passed the Defense of Marriage Act prohibiting the federal government from recognizing same-sex marriage. President Clinton signed that bill.

Also, members of the House of Representatives have introduced a constitutional amendment to prohibit state governments or the federal government from recognizing same-sex marriages. The amendment is House Joint Resolution (HJR) 56. There are 75 co-sponsors of the bill in the House.

Nonetheless, the public seems to be moving in the direction of supporting same-sex marriage. The results of a poll released by the Pew Research Center show that while 53 percent of respondents maintained they opposed gay marriage, that number had fallen by more than 10 percentage points in less than a decade. In 1996 a solid 65 percent said they opposed allowing gays to marry. The level of public support for gay marriage is also on the rise, with 38 percent now backing same-sex marriage, compared to 27 percent seven years ago.

We are definitely moving in the right direction. The improvement has resulted from, among other things, solid lobbying and activism by many in the community. Our opponents are certainly not defeated and we need to continue the fight for our rights but we are moving in the right direction. I hope you will stay engaged in that fight. If we work together we will be victorious.

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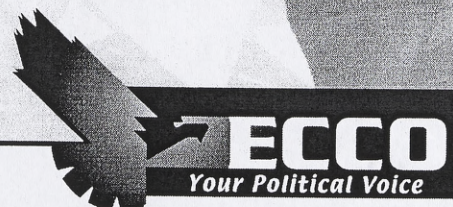
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